Institutional Effectiveness
2020-2021

Program: Communication BS

College and Department: College of Interdisciplinary Studies – Department of Communication

Contact: Brenda Wilson

Mission: The Bachelor of Science degree in Communication supports the department's goals to help students "tap the power of words to create meaning and understanding, to pursue intellectual curiosity, cultural awareness, and creative expression, and to build effective communication skills." The communication program at TTU is dedicated to fostering a strong sense of public citizenship preparing students for civic participation in an increasingly complex world that requires sophisticated, practical, critical, and theoretical understanding of the human communication process. The B.S. in communication degree program includes both communication studies and journalism and supports these outcomes by using active learning strategies and experiential learning to develop students' critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills for their professional goals and personal success. Our mission is to provide general education instruction in oral communication and a variety of undergraduate courses in communication studies and journalism including mass communication, print and broadcast journalism, literary journalism, public relations, advertising, photojournalism, interpersonal, intercultural, and computer-mediated communication, persuasion, and conflict resolution. Besides those majoring in communication with an emphasis in communication studies or journalism, Tennessee Tech students take our courses for general education requirements or sometimes as a minor that will enhance their communication skills and their versatility in whatever career they choose. Students are encouraged to get hands-on, real-world experience in their field through the internship or co-op program. Our program provides students the opportunity to participate in various clubs related to their major as well.

The journalism curriculum is designed to prepare students for a variety of employment opportunities in the communication professions, primarily in print media and public relations. The program stresses practical experience. We offer students experience in media through work for the student-run newspaper (The Oracle), radio station (WTTU-FM), yearbook (the Eagle), campus magazine (Eagle Eye), and multimedia club (Eagle View Productions). The student newspaper, magazine, yearbook, radio station, and multimedia club, and the regional educational television station are utilized extensively in connection with class work.

The communication studies curriculum provides instruction in the ability to understand and apply principles that guide communication theory and research; the ability to deliver effective public speeches; the ability to write clearly and concisely; the ability to engage in effective communication on the interpersonal level, in small and large group activities and settings. Our award-winning speech and debate team gives students competitive forensics experience to strengthen their oral presentation skills and debate and persuasion techniques.

The Communication Department's Mission relates to the Tech Tomorrow core principles of Academic Excellence, Community Engagement and Student Success.

Annually, at the conclusion of each reporting period, the department chair shares the results of assessment data with the faculty by emailing the final report for their review before the opening faculty

meeting at the beginning of fall semester. If assessment data indicates curricular modifications may be needed, the department chair reviews the year's results with the directors of each academic program prior to the fall faculty meeting to discuss whether modifications are needed and consider specific modifications to propose to the faculty. If faculty decides curricular modifications are needed, the process follows the campus shared governance structure. If data indicate modifications related to student media or speech and debate team performance, the department chair and directors meet with the advisers/coaches of those groups to discuss a strategy for improved outcomes. If data indicate improvements are needed related to internships, the chair will discuss with the internship coordinators strategies for improved outcomes. Any general suggestions for improved outcomes indicated on the senior exit survey are discussed with all faculty and staff to determine whether modifications are needed.

Program Goals:

PG 1: The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in a number of different fields that emphasize effective communication skills or for a graduate program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills in their respective settings.

a. Journalism students will demonstrate the ability to write and edit competently for the news media and public relations settings

b. Communication students will demonstrate effective oral presentation skills that correspond with various communication events and the ability to evaluate written and oral presentations.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of the media.

SLO 3: Communication students will demonstrate an understanding of theory and research and their practical application to Interpersonal, Intercultural, Public Address, and Business Communication.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

PG 1: The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in a number of different fields that emphasize effective communication skills or for a graduate program.

1. Senior Exit Survey: We specifically ask graduating seniors to report their progress on the program goals and learning objectives in each concentration.

   Senior Exit Surveys provide feedback for continuous quality improvement of our program and to determine students' perceived progress on our program goals and learning outcomes 1-4. The majority of comments are positive which indicates to us that students are pleased with our program. We review the data and implement improvements annually. We successfully completed an audit of our academic program in spring 2013. One of the commendations we received from the audit team was for the enthusiasm students who participated in the review process showed for their major.

   Thresholds of acceptability are the following:

   Target performance*=We expect a majority of students to express satisfaction in our offerings.*

   Current performance*=The majority of comments are positive which indicates to us that students are pleased with our program.*

   Minimum performance*=We review the data and implement improvements annually. If a majority of comments were negative, we would make adjustments based on specific items addressed and the judgement of faculty and staff.*

2. Internship Extra-Curricular Experiences: All program goals and student learning outcomes are evaluated on an ongoing and systematic basis. Students are evaluated through coursework, internships, and extra-curricular experiences on their performance of effective written and oral communication skills in various settings.

   Faculty oversight of internships is maintained by interns supplying written monthly summaries of their internship work.

   Students receive a grade for internships to reflect their level of performance in relevant, real-world settings. Students are expected to make at least a "B" on the recommendation of their internship supervisor. If a majority of students make below a "B" in a given semester, the internship coordinators will consult with the employment supervisors to determine why overall student performance is low and develop a strategy for improvement. Therefore, our thresholds of acceptability are the following:

   Target performance*=Students are expected to make at least a B upon the recommendation of their internship supervisor.*

   Current performance*=For the past five years most students have earned As.*

   Minimum performance*=If a majority of students earn below a B in a given semester, we will consult the internship supervisors to identify and correct student performance deficiencies.*

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills in their respective settings.

1. National Survey of Student Engagement: The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses students' confidence in their abilities to communicate effectively using written and oral communication skills.

   Through coursework and extra-curricular experiences, communication majors will be required to write, edit, and present to a variety of audiences and through several media. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses students' confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively. These results are compared to other TTU students and our Carnegie peer institutions. Students are expected to score at least as well as other Tech students and Carnegie peers. If Communication majors fall below the average scores in both of these categories for three consecutive testing periods, faculty will review our course content and student participation in extra-curricular experiences to determine if adjustments are needed. Therefore, our thresholds of acceptability are as follows:

   Target performance*=Students are expected to score at least as well as other Tech students and Carnegie peers*

   Current performance*=* Communication students have shown strong gains in both categories for all the testing periods except the senior written communication category in 2020. We will continue to monitor student performance on this assessment.

   Minimum performance*=If Communication majors fall below the average scores in both of these categories for three consecutive testing periods, faculty will review our course content and student participation in extra-curricular experiences to determine if adjustments are needed.*

2. Speech and Debate Team and Student Media Extra-Curricular Experiences: Debate and Forensics team experience offers students training and application opportunities for their public speaking skills in argumentation and persuasion. While participation on the team is open to all students, speech majors are required to participate. The team travels to and participates in state and regional speech contests and tournaments. The number of various awards received by our students provides a measure of success in achieving the learning objectives and has grown each year.

   For decades, Tech's journalism program has produced a weekly newspaper, a year-round radio station and an annual yearbook that are supplemental to the curriculum and provide practical experience in both print and broadcast media. In 2012 we added a campus magazine, Eagle Eye, to the media mix, and in 2016 we added a broadcasting club, Eagle View Productions. An internship program is available to students that provides experience in organizations on and off campus for news reporting and public relations and with the PBS-affiliate on campus for television broadcasting experience.

   Student media experience is guaranteed through a "campus beat" system in print reporting and editing classes. We include beat assignments in one introductory and two advanced journalism courses. All three of these courses are required for the journalism degree program. Students may also take an introductory broadcasting course with a campus beat assignment for the broadcast media. Other opportunities for hands-on learning include management positions on the student media and the internship or co-op program. Students receive a grade in courses and internships to reflect their level of performance in relevant academic assignments and real-

world settings. Academic assignments are designed to provide practical instruction for news reporting and editing and for public relations. These courses prepare students for work at internships and co-ops as well. The Speech and Debate team, student media and Society for Collegiate Journalists members compete regionally and nationally for external assessment and recognition of their skills. Students set individual and team goals for these competitions. The student media goal is to enter publications in at least three categories of competition each year. The speech and debate team compete in at least two tournaments each semester. Thresholds of acceptability are the following:

Target performance*=The student media goal is to enter publications in at least three categories of competition for a national or regional contest each year. The speech and debate team goal is to compete in at least two tournaments each semester.*

Current performance*=We are exceeding these goals*

Minimum performance*=If student media do not compete in a national or regional competition for two consecutive competition cycles, we will consult media advisers to determine the reason for lack of participation. If the speech and debate team does not compete in at least one tournament for two consecutive semesters, we will consult the team coaches to determine the reason.*

3. General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment of Oral Communication: The General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment of the oral communication competencies of students enrolled in COMM 2025 Fundamentals of Communication course is conducted annually every spring semester. This assessment provides very useful data on student progress in oral communication competencies across multiple sections of the COMM 2025 Fundamentals of Communication including the following oral communication competencies: 1. Students are able to distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement; 2. Students are able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose; 3. Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition); 4. Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics; and 5. Students are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple sources. Our students are expected to score at or above the satisfactory level. If a majority of students fall below the satisfactory level for two consecutive testing periods, we will review the COMM 2025 course content to determine if adjustments are needed. Therefore, our thresholds of acceptability are as follows:

Target performance*=Students are expected to score at or above satisfactory.*

Current performance*=Students are exceeding our expectations.*

Minimum performance*=If a majority of students fall below the satisfactory level for two consecutive testing periods, we will review the content of COMM 2025 to determine what adjustments may be needed*

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of the media.

1. California Critical Thinking Skills Test: The California Critical Thinking Skills Test is given each semester to graduating seniors to assess general education learning outcomes of our graduates.

Critical-thinking skills are necessary to be discerning consumers of media and for the practical application of theoretical concepts (learning outcomes 2 and 4).

Employers cite communication and critical-thinking skills as top qualifications for potential employees. The CCTST permits test-takers to demonstrate the critical-thinking skills required to succeed in educational or workplace settings where solving problems and making decisions by forming reasoned judgments are important. Communication students are expected to perform as well as their campus peers and the national average for the test. If scores fall below these two benchmarks for three consecutive testing periods, we will review course content to determine whether adjustments are needed to improve critical-thinking skills and we will seek added extra-curricular opportunities for students to build these skills. Therefore, our thresholds of acceptability are as follows:

Target performance*=At or above the campus and national averages*

Current performance*= Communication students outperformed the campus and national average one of the past five years and outperformed the national average two of the past five years. However, scores were lower that both the national and campus average for three of the five testing periods but not in consecutive years. We will monitor their performance to determine whether course adjustments are needed.*

Minimum performance*=If students score lower than their campus and national peers for three consecutive testing periods, we will review course content and seek ways to improve students' skills in these areas.*

2. QEP/EDGE Participation: Communication faculty members participate in the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, now known as the EDGE program, in order to give students the opportunity to improve communication and critical-thinking skills as well as to provide hands-on, experiential learning. The EDGE program seeks to improve critical-thinking and communication skills and real-world problem-solving through the use of active learning strategies. The program administers a pre- and post- survey to measure students' perceived progress in these skills.

   Employers cite communication and critical-thinking skills as top qualifications for potential employees. The communication program participates in the EDGE initiative when possible in order to show student gains in these areas.

   Thresholds of acceptability:

   Target performance*=Outcomes are dependent on the particulars of the EDGE project of a given semester. Significant gains from pre- to post-test would ideally be at the p=.05 level or higher.*

   Current performance*=Two faculty and four courses participated in the 2020-21 academic year. The pandemic delivery method of the pre- and post-tests negatively impacted participation and reliable data for measuring gains.*

   Minimum performance*=If significant gains are not seen, we would reevaluate the project components to determine what adjustments would improve significance between pre- and post-test.*

SLO 3: *Communication students will demonstrate an understanding of theory and research and their practical application to Interpersonal, Intercultural, Public Address, and Business Communication.*

1. Area Concentration Assessment Test (ACAT) for Communication: Communication majors take the ACAT (Area Concentration Assessment Test) for Communication which tests students in the following areas of the communication discipline: Interpersonal Communications, Laws and Ethics, Mass Communication/Mass Media, and Public Speaking/Debate. Students are expected to score at least as well as the average score in their reference group. Students' overall performance score should be at or above the 50th percentile. If scores in subject categories fall below the 30th percentile for three consecutive testing periods, we will review the course content for that subject area to determine if adjustments are needed. Therefore, our thresholds of acceptability are the following:

   ***Target performance**=Overall average at or above the 50th percentile*

   ***Current performance**=Between 62nd and 83rd percentile overall for past five years*

   ***Minimum performance**=Below the 50th percentile overall or below 30th percentile on subject categories for three consecutive testing periods.*

   *ACAT scores range from 200-800 with an average score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Nationally, 68% of scores in any given year should fall between approximately 400 and 600. Year-to-year variations in the size of the reference groups will cause scores to fall outside these limits. The content area scores are compared with a reference group of other examinees taking the same content area. The overall performance score is compared with other examinees taking the ACAT in this discipline with the same number of content areas. The overall score is a separately determined performance appraisal rather than a numerical average of the area scores. From ACAT Departmental Score Report. For more information, visit www.collegeoutcomes.com

2. Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24): The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) typically has an α of .93-.95 (McCroskey, Beatty, Kearney, & Plax, 1985). The scale accesses four dimensions of communication apprehension: interpersonal, group, meeting, and public speaking (McCroskey, 1982; Rubin, 2009). Instructors in COMM 2025, a required general education communication course, use the instrument to measure progress on building confidence in students' communication skills. The instrument can be scored both by adding the value of items in individual sub-measures to assess communication apprehension in a particular context or by combining the scores of each sub-measure to assess overall communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1982). The norms for the PRCA-24 are listed below. Our goal for Comm 2025 is to reduce communication anxiety scores of students from the pre-test to the post-test, or beginning and end of the courses. The thresholds of acceptability are the following:

   ***Target performance**=Our goal for Comm 2025 is a Communication Anxiety mean reduction of 6.25 from the pre-test to the post-test, or beginning and end of the courses.*

   ***Current performance**=The average mean for reduction of Communication Anxiety for the past year was 10.54. We are exceeding our target performance.*

***Minimum performance**=If the mean reduction in Communication Anxiety falls below 4.25 for two consecutive testing periods, we will reevaluate the COMM 2025 course to determine what adjustments would improve student outcomes.*

Norms for the PRCA-24	High Anxiety	Medium Anxiety	Low Anxiety	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal	19 or more	18-11	10 or lower	14.2	3.9
Group	20 or more	19-11	10 or lower	15.4	4.8
Meeting	21 or more	20-13	12 or lower	16.4	4.2
Public	25 or more	24-14	13 or lower	19.3	5.1
Overall Communication Anxiety	81 or more	80-51	50 or lower	65.6	15.3

**http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/prca24.htm*

Results:

PG 1: The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in a number of different fields that emphasize effective communication skills or for a graduate program.

1. Senior Exit Survey: Students are asked to complete the **senior exit survey** immediately after completing the ACAT test, during the same testing appointment time. Most students in the journalism concentration plan to work after graduating, and many have already accepted jobs. Others plan to go to graduate school or law school upon graduation. They chose their major because of their interest or ability in writing and because of the importance of these skills for their chosen career path. They chose Tech's journalism program because of its size, friendly atmosphere, affordability, proximity to home, broad curriculum that employs a hands-on approach to learning and opportunities on the student media. Some suggestions for improvement include instruction in podcasting and more hands-on broadcasting and video production opportunities as well as more coursework in advanced editing. Students reported being pleased with the academic and career advising they received and would recommend the program to others. They reported being pleased with their progress on journalism program learning objectives and outcomes and with their professors. Students in the communication studies concentration report that they are planning to work or attend graduate school upon graduation. Some students said they chose communication studies as a major because of their own interests or prior experience in public speaking. Others commented that they majored in communication studies because they recognize effective communication skills as an attribute potential employers seek in graduates. Students said they chose Tech's program because of its breadth of courses and small class size. Communication studies graduates report high satisfaction with their professors and the advisement they received and said they would recommend the program to future students. They report high satisfaction with progress on the learning objectives of the program as well.

2. Internship Extra-Curricular Experiences: All program goals and student learning outcomes are evaluated on an ongoing and systematic basis. Students are evaluated through coursework,

internships, and/or co-ops each semester on their **performance** of effective written and oral communication skills in various settings. Faculty oversight in the internship program is maintained by interns supplying written monthly summaries of their work. Internship supervisors recommend a grade to the faculty coordinator at the end of the term. The results of this assessment for the past five years are shown in the chart below:

2020-21	CS	JOUR	CS	JOUR	Total
	3-cr		6-cr		13
A	2	9	1	0	12
W/I	1				1

2019-20	CS	JOUR	CS	JOUR	Total
	3-cr		6-cr		24
A	8	16			24

2018-19	CS	JOUR	CS	JOUR	Total
	3-cr		6-cr		24
A	4	17	1	1	23
B		1			1

2017-18	CS	JOUR	CS	JOUR	Total
	3-cr		6-cr		24
A	1	19		2	22
B		1			1
F	1				1

2016-17	CS	JOUR	CS	JOUR	Total
	3-cr		6-cr		13
A	3	7			10
B		1			1
C		1			1
W	1				1

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills in their respective settings.

1. National Survey of Student Engagement: The **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** is administered about every two years at TTU to a sample of freshmen and senior students. The assessment of oral communication skills is based on the student's response to the statement "Made a class presentation." Response categories include, "Very Often, Often, Sometimes, or Never," and these responses are converted to a mean score. The assessment of written communication skills is based on the student's response to the statement, "Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources" or "Combined

ideas from different courses when completing assignments." The same response categories as above are used. In the most recent testing periods for which data are available (2014, 2016, 2017, 2020), Communication students performed as well as or better than their campus and Carnegie peers from freshman to senior years for both categories except for the freshman oral and written communication categories as well as senior written category in 2016 and freshman oral communication category in 2017 as well as the senior written communication category in 2020. Communication students have shown strong gains in both categories for all the testing periods except the senior written communication category in 2020. We will continue to monitor student performance on this assessment. Data for the three most recent years available (2014, 2016, 2017 and 2020) are presented below:

		Oral Communication		Written Communication	
		Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
2020	TTU Communication	3.50	3.57	3.13	2.86
	TTU Total	2.40	2.70	2.50	2.90
	Carnegie Peers	2.31	2.70	2.60	2.90
2017	TTU Communication	2.00	3.29	3.00	3.43
	TTU Total	2.24	2.70	2.44	2.93
	Carnegie Peers	2.31	2.59	2.57	2.90
2016	TTU Communication	1.75	3.45	1.75	2.55
	TTU Total	2.20	2.70	2.50	2.90
	Carnegie Peers	2.30	2.70	2.60	3.00
2014	TTU Communication	3.00	3.50	3.25	3.50
	TTU Total	3.00	3.30	3.10	3.50
	Carnegie Peers	2.70	3.10	2.90	3.30

2. Speech and Debate Team and Student Media Extra-Curricular Experiences:
Students enter extra-curricular competitions of work done for the student media or clubs associated with their major in order to get external assessment of their performance and skills. For many years student media productions have been entered in various college media contests. The number of various awards received by our students provides a measure of success in achieving the learning objectives. In the year of COVID-19, student media not only continued to produce publications despite the challenges but also excelled in the quality of their work. The coordinator of the SCJ competition articulated this achievement in a letter accompanying our awards certificates. The letter mentions the special category of COVID-19 coverage added to the year's competition. A Tech journalism major won a first-place award in that special category. Please see the attached letter acknowledging this accomplishment.

SOCIETY FOR COLLEGIATE JOURNALISTS

TO: All SCJ Chapter Advisers
FROM: Dr. Andrea Frantz, Executive Director AF
RE: SCJ National Contest results
Date: April 2, 2021

As I think back on this past year, I am amazed by the tenacity student journalists showed in the face of so many challenges. The pandemic, remote learning, the most fractious presidential election in recent memory, economic woes...the list can go on, obviously.

But through it all, student journalists continued to produce. To do so they had to call on significant problem-solving skills as universities limited face-to-face contact not only with sources but with their own fellow staff members. One student said to me not long ago, "I guess if I've learned anything this year, it's that I can navigate pretty much any obstacle life throws at me."

This year's SCJ national contest winners deserve more than the enclosed certificates, in my opinion, and I wish I had something more to offer. But since I don't, I will simply ask that you pass on to your staff members from me that *what they do makes a difference*. This year, perhaps more than ever, I am convinced that the work our students did actually saved lives, as the special COVID-19 reporting category clearly illustrated. Their dedication and hard work captured an historic year visually, verbally, and audibly, and that's something to be incredibly proud of.

And without the amazing advising all of you offer these students, none of this would be possible. I'm well aware that several of you have faced unbelievably tough budget cuts, prioritization, and even threat of program closure. Many of you are juggling workloads that three people should carry, not one. Yet, thanks to your leadership, students are learning and pushing forward. You are all a great inspiration to me.

Congratulations to you and your students on the enclosed awards. I hope they are a bright spot in the close of this academic year.

The chart below summarizes the categories in which we were judged and the awards received at the regional and national levels for the past five years:

Student Media Awards 2017-2021

Year	Media	Rank	Award	Individual	Awarding Organization
2017	The Oracle	1st	News Page		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2017	The Oracle	1st	News Stories (excluding Sports)	Elissa Longfellow	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2017	Eagle Eye Magazine	Hon. Men	Individual Magazine Writing	Paige Stanage	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2017	Eagle Yearbook	1st	Yearbook Photography	Ashton Breeden	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2017	Eagle Eye Magazine	3rd	Outstanding General Interest Magazine		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2017	Eagle Yearbook	2nd	Concept of the Book		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	Eagle Eye Magazine	1st	Individual Magazine Writing	Isaac Wright	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	Eagle Eye Magazine	2nd	Magazine Overall Excellence		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Oracle	2nd	Feature Photography	Marcelo Gonzales	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Oracle	Hon. Men	News Stories	J.K. McMillen	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Eagle Yearbook	1st	Concept of the Book		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Eagle Yearbook	2nd	Yearbook Overall Excellence (Over 7,000)		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Eagle Yearbook	2nd	Photography		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Coverage of the Year		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Reporting in Words		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2018	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Display		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2019	Eagle Eye Magazine	3rd	Magazine General Interest Overall Excellence		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2019	The Oracle	1st	Best Sports Writer	Noah McKay	Southeast Journalism Conference - Best of South
2019	Eagle Eye Magazine	3rd	Best Magazine Page Layout Designer (17F EEM)	Hayden White	Southeast Journalism Conference - Best of South
2019	Eagle Eye Magazine	4th	Best Magazine Writer (18S EEM)	Maddison Potter	Southeast Journalism Conference - Best of South

Year	Media	Rank	Award	Individual	Awarding Organization
2019	The Oracle	2nd	Copy Editing	Kitty Porterfield	SEJC Conference Onsite Competition
2020	Eagle Eye Magazine	3rd	Magazine Overall Excellence		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2020	The Oracle	3rd	Continuing Coverage	Kendyl Seals	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2020	The Eagle Yearbook	2nd	Yearbook Overall Excellence		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2020	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Yearbook Best Concept		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2020	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Yearbook Best Writing		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2020	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Yearbook Display (Layout, Design, Graphics)		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Oracle	1st	COVID-19 Coverage	Emma Kenner	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Oracle	Hon. Men	Newspaper Overall Excellence (less than weekly)		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	Eagle Eye Magazine	Hon. Men	Magazine General Interest Overall Excellence		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Eagle Yearbook	1st	Yearbook Overall Excellence		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Terry Vander Hayden Award for Coverage of the Year		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Yearbook Best Concept		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Yearbook Best Writing		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Eagle Yearbook	3rd	Yearbook Best Photography		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Eagle Yearbook	2nd	Yearbook Best Display (Layout, Design, Graphics)		Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Oracle	1st	Feature (excluding sports)	Irene Sullivan	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Oracle	3rd	Feature Photography	Emma Kenner	Society for Collegiate Journalists
2021	The Oracle	9th	Best Feature Writer	Victory Murray	Southeast Journalism Conference - Best of South

Debate and Forensics team experience offers students opportunities for training and application of their public speaking skills in argumentation and persuasion. While participation on the team is open to all students, speech majors are required to participate. The team travels to and participates in state and regional speech contests and tournaments. The number of various awards received by our students provides a measure of success in achieving the learning

objectives and has grown each year until COVID-19 limited our chances to participate in tournaments. The team continued to participate successfully in online tournaments throughout the pandemic academic year. We are confident the team will continue to demonstrate their skills through successful tournament performance as more competitions are held post-pandemic. **The following chart** shows the team's accomplishments for the past year:

Speech-Debate Team Awards
2020-2021

Term	Tournament	Rank	Award	Individual	Awarding Organization
Fall 2020	Steve Hunt Classic	Quarterfinalist	Novice Debate	Jacob Teeters, FR	Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR
Fall 2020	Steve Hunt Classic	Octo-finalist	Varsity Debate	Sarah Stansbury, SR	Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR
Fall 2020	Cyber Falcon Tournament	2nd Place	Informative Speaking	Alexandria Miller, FR	Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH
Fall 2020	Cyber Falcon Tournament	Semi-finalist	Novice Debate	Jacob Teeters, FR	Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH
Fall 2020	Climb the Mountain	9th Place	Overall Speaker	Jacob Teeters, FR	Washington State University, Seattle, WA
Fall 2020	Climb the Mountain	1st Place	Novice Debate	Aaron Thomas, SO & Colt Clements, SR	Washington State University, Seattle, WA
Fall 2020	Climb the Mountain	6th Place	Overall Speaker	Aaron Thomas, SO	Washington State University, Seattle, WA
Fall 2020	Climb the Mountain	5th Place	Overall Speaker	Colt Clements, SR	Washington State University, Seattle, WA
Spring 2021	Remote Robot Rumble	11th Place	Varsity Debate	Elliot Payne, JR & Jay Norsworthy, JR	Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH
Spring 2021	IPDA National Championships	Top 16	Individual Speaking	Sistina Hammonds, SR	International Parliamentary Debate Association
Spring 2021	Novice No-More Tournament	2nd Place	Poetry Interpretation	Alex Miller, FR	Liberty University, Lynchburch, VA

3. General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment of Oral Communication: The **General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment** includes the following oral communication outcomes/competencies of students enrolled in the COMM 2025 *Fundamentals of Communication* course: A. Analyze and evaluate oral and/or written expression by listening and reading critically for elements that reflect an awareness of situation, audience, purpose, and diverse points of view. B. Distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement and order and develop major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose. C. Use appropriate rhetorical genres and technologies to address intended audiences. D. Demonstrate that writing and/or speaking processes include planning, organizing, composing, revising, and editing. E. Compose written and/or oral presentations employing appropriate technology, format, diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics. F. Manage and coordinate information gathered from multiple sources for the purposes of problem solving and decision making. G. Evaluate the use of evidence, analysis, and persuasive strategies, including basic distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences. Scoring is as follows: Exceptional=4; Exceeds Expectations=3; Meets Expectations=2; Unacceptable=1. The goal of the COMM 2025 class is to ensure that students as a whole are meeting a minimum score of 2 or higher on each outcome.

   The Public Speaking General Education Assessment is designed to measure how well the students demonstrate their ability to meet the goals of Tenneessee Tech's General Education outcomes for Communication. This measure is conducted in the spring of each academic term. The instructor of the classes uses the rubic to evaluate the students on each of the outcomes in their final individual speech. Averages across all sections are shown below. The goal of the COMM 2025 class is to ensure that student as a whole are meeting a minimum score of 2 or higher on each of outcome. Students in the 2020-21 academic year scored an overall average of 2.75 and a 2.57 or better on each competency area. This is below previous years' performance. The pandemic changed how classes were conducted and how speeches were presented. This change most likely impacted overall scores. The chart below shows scores for the most recent testing period:

Number of Students	Public Speaking Gen Ed Assessment COMM 2025							Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
242	2.57	2.84	2.87	2.66	2.95	2.71	2.69	2.75

Tennessee Tech General Education Outcomes for Communication	
A.	Analyze and evaluate oral and/or written expression by listening and reading critically for elements that reflect an awareness of situation, audience, purpose, and diverse points of view.
B.	Distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement and order and develop major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose.
C.	Use appropriate rhetorical genres and technologies to address intended audiences.
D.	Demonstrate that writing and/or speaking processes include planning, organizing, composing, revising, and editing.
E.	Compose written and/or oral presentations employing appropriate technology, format, diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.
F.	Manage and coordinate information gathered from multiple sources for the purposes of problem solving and decision-making.
G.	Evaluate the use of evidence, analysis, and persuasive strategies, including basic distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences.

Rubric		
Exceptional	=	4
Exceeds Expectations	=	3
Meets Expectations	=	2
Unacceptable	=	1

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of the media.

1. California Critical Thinking Skills Test: On the **California Critical Thinking Skills Test**, communication students have scored lower than the campus and national average for three of past five years and lower than the campus average for four of the past five years. The chart below shows how our students compared to the campus and national averages since 2013. We will continue to monitor our students' performance on this test.

	(N)	Comm Students	Campus Avg	National Avg
2013-2014		17.9	17.7	17.1
2014-2015	25	18.5	17.3	17.1
2015-2016	11	19.6	16.9	17.1
2016-2017	41	16.1	17.1	16.2
2017-2018	22	15.9	17.6	16.2
2018-2019	27	16.2/75	16.8/76	15.4/74
2019-2020	25	14.6/73	16.1/75	15.4/74
2020-2021	25	72.2	74.4	74

2. QEP/EDGE Participation: We will continue to pursue EDGE opportunities when appropriate to strengthen our students' critical-thinking skills. Two faculty were awarded EDGE grants in 2020-21. These student experiences are described below:

COMM 4430, Advanced Interpersonal Communication
Fall 2020: Review of Literature Poster Project - this creative inquiry allowed students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of interpersonal communication more specifically to an area they were interested in pursuing. By exploring and evaluating research and summarizing and synthesizing this information into a final poster project, students effectively demonstrated their ability to engage in creative inquiry.

COMM 2090 – Interpersonal Communication
Spring 2021: Research Comparisons Project - this creative inquiry allowed students to have more engagement with critical thinking activities as they located and summarized information found on the web and compared this to information obtained from the textbook. This unit helped students critically think about information obtained from the web as they synthesized the information into a final creative project that demonstrated the similarities and differences between two different types of information.

JOUR 3460 - Introduction to Public Relations
Fall 2020: Project to research best practices for establishing a student-run public relations agency at Tech. Students reviewed scholarly literature, collected descriptions of successful agencies at peer institutions, and observed professional agencies to create a plan for establishing an agency at Tech.

JOUR 4460 - Public Relations Cases and Practices
Spring 2021: Project to simulate activities of a professional agency by developing a promotional

campaign for an off-campus client. The class researched the product, set objectives, created programming and promotional materials, and organized an event to introduce the client's product to the campus community. They presented their results to the client during the last week of the semester.

SLO 3: *Communication students will demonstrate an understanding of theory and research and their practical application to Interpersonal, Intercultural, Public Address, and Business Communication.*

1. Area Concentration Assessment Test (ACAT) for Communication: Students take the **Area Concentration Assessment Test** (ACAT) for communication during the semester in which they plan to graduate or once they have completed coursework in their major. Since we began administering the test in fall 2010, our students have been performing well. However, in the current testing period, our overall scores decreased from the 82nd percentile to the 68th percentile with drops in three of the four testing categories. This was in contrast to the previous year in which scores increased in three of four categories. Two students scored in the single digits. Their ACAT performance is inconsistent with their performance in their courses and with their GPAs. We suspect the students didn't put forth adequate effort to perform to their abilities. These two outliers brought down scores for this testing period. We will monitor whether this was a one-time phenomenon associated with COVID-19 or whether we will need to alter the timeline for when students take the test in order to require a repeat of the test if a satisfactory score isn't achieved. The chart below shows scores for the past five years of testing.

ACAT Averages
16F - 21S

	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021		
Area	Avg	% 'ile	Ref Grp	Avg	% 'ile	Ref Grp	Avg	% 'ile	Ref Grp	Avg	% 'ile	Ref Grp	Avg	% 'ile	Ref Grp
Interpersonal Communication	496	48	1034	519	58	1000	510	54	911	564	74	854	499	50	854
Law and Ethics	568	75	922	587	81	1002	557	72	1052	542	66	1011	521	58	1011
Mass Communication/Mass Media	519	58	1312	543	67	1305	486	44	1233	589	81	1163	601	84	1163
Public Speaking/Debate	517	57	1010	524	59	1068	505	52	1070	585	80	1044	524	59	1044
Overall Average	562	73	1058	575	77	1015	530	62	945	594	83	908	548	68	908
		N=	42		N=	32		N=	39		N=	27		N=	29

2. Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

Age

In the Academic year of 2020-2021 the students ranged in age from 17 to 55 years old (*M* = 20.09; *SD* = 6.03).

Procedures:

An online form was created using google forms. The link to the form was sent via email to all faculty members in the department. Dr. Kash's students were contacted via email. All participating faculty sent the web address to their students in their respective COMM 2025 classes. A report with the participating students' names and data was sent to the professors by Dr. Christen at the beginning and the end of the semester. Students were also sent an email which contained their results. All students enrolled in COMM 2025 courses are required to take the survey as graded assignment, both at the beginning and at the end of the semester. However we do not have a hundred percent participation. The response rate was 26 % among

the professors that participated (all but one professor's students turned in some data). This lower number can be due to two factors. Students still can choose not to take the survey thus affecting their overall grade. Secondly students who take the measure at the beginning of the year may not be actively attending at the end of the semester. So the response rate may be lower than hoped due to simple attrition. In fact, more than two hundred responses were dropped due to missing data from either the beginning or the end of the semester. Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 had additional issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communication apprehension (CA) total score showed a reduction in communication $t(96) = 7.2$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.82$ with an overall reduction of 10.54 in the mean. This is important to note since prior research has found that high levels of CA have a negative effect on student assertiveness (McCroskey et al., 1985) and student ability to recall lecture material if they are expected to interact in class (Booth-Butterfield, 1988). Going beyond the classroom, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) state that oral/written communication, Teamwork, and Professionalism/work ethic are an essential requirements for new college graduates (2015). The description of these requirements all pertain to communication skills. The results suggest that the COMM 2025 class increases a student's confidence in their ability to interact with others, which will have an affect both on their academic and employment goals.

Additionally, the public speaking apprehension portion of the measure showed the most substantive decrease with a reduction of 2.79 in the mean of the pretest posttest. Since public speaking anxiety is the primary concern for the COMM 2025 course, these results show that there is a reduction in speech anxiety $t(96) = 5.8$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.59$. Previous studies have shown that speech anxiety affects avoidance and withdrawal behaviors (Beaty, 1987), and speech duration (Beaty, Forst, & Stewart, 1980). This implies that students that complete COMM 2025 will be better prepared to present information in their other classes and in their future careers. The full analyses can be seen below:

PRCA-24 Contexts	Fall 2019[1,2]		Spring 2020[1, 2]		Academic Year 2020-2021[2]	
	Reduction in the Mean	**Results**	**Reduction in the Mean**	**Results**	**Reduction in the Mean**	**Results**
Public Speaking	2.0	$t(57) = 3.1$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.48$	4.0	$t(38) = 4.6$, $p <.05$ $d= 0.74$	2.79	$t(96) = 5.8$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.59$
Meeting	2.7	$t(57) = 4.6$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.73$	3.7	$t(38) = 4.5$, $p <.05$ $d= 0.71$	3.01	$t(96) = 7.0$, $p < .05$ $d= .71$
Interpersonal	1.35	$t(57) = 3.04$, $p < .05$ $d=0.4$	3.0	$t(38) = 5.1$, $p <.05$ $d= -.81$	2.01	$t(96) = 3.59$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.56$
Group	2.2	$t(57) = 5.35$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.7$	3.3	$t(38) = 4.3$, $p <.05$ $d= 0.7$	2.7	$t(96) = 5.81$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.68$
Comm Anxiety	8.26	$t(57) = 6.5$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.85$	13.92	$t(38) = 5.47$, $p <.05$ $d= 0.88$	10.54	$t(96) = 7.2$, $p < .05$ $d= 0.82$

1. During the Fall of 2020 the measurement software was changed to enhance security. The new procedure required students to create and keep a copy of a code. A large majority of the students did not follow the procedure. This resulted in 270 participants who's pre and post data could not be matched up. The procedures are being revised during the summer of 2021, to ensure that data collection will not be affected in the future.

2. COVID-19 Pandemic: The data collection was done during the pandemic. This may have affected response rates.

References:

Beaty, M. J. (1987). Communicaiton apprehension as a determinate of avoiance, withdrawal and perormane anxiety. *Communicaiton Quarterly*, 35, 202-217.

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Booth-Butterfield, S. (1988). Inhibition and student recall of instructional messages. *Communicaiton Education*, 37, 312-324.

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McCroskey, J. C., Beatty, M. J., Kearney, P., & Plax, T. G. (1985). The content validity of the PRCA-24 as a measure of communication apprehension across communication contexts. *Communication Quarterly, 33*, 165-173.

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Rubin, R. B. (2009). *Communication research measures : a sourcebook. Volume II*. New York: Routledge.

Modifications for Improvement:

PG 1: The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in a number of different fields that emphasize effective communication skills or for a graduate program.

1. Assessment: Senior Exit Survey
   The communication department acquired additional space and added a teaching lab in the Roaden University Center to give students more access to technology including software for design courses and video editing. We converted a production room storage area into a podcasting studio with industry-standard equipment. We acquired the campus television studio, hired a faculty member with expertise in the field, and upgraded equipment to offer additional hands-on instruction in broadcasting and video production. This improvement is based on feedback from students in the exit surveys and from faculty observation and will provide students the opportunity for additional hands-on instruction in various media.

2. Assessment: Internship Extra-Curricular Experiences
   Participation in the internship program is optional. However, before the pandemic, we decided to focus our efforts on increasing participation in the 2019-20 academic year and developed a promotional campaign including flyers, newsletter and email messages, and advisor recommendations. Although the pandemic interfered with internship program enrollment growth, we maintained somewhat strong numbers and will continue our promotional efforts through the 2021-22 academic year. We have partnered with Tech's Office of Communication and Marketing to increase opportunities for placement of our majors in on-campus communication settings. This improvement is based on faculty observation and feedback from students in exit interviews where they stated they wish they had known about and/or taken advantage of internship opportunities. Our internship program is a valuable experience, and we want students to be aware of and participate in this opportunity.

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills in their respective settings.

Assessment: Speech and Debate Team and Student Media Extra-Curricular Experiences
Although we are exceeding current expectations in this area, especially in print media, the journalism faculty set a goal of encouraging students to enter more student media competition categories now that we have more opportunities within the curriculum for students to produce podcasts, audio/video broadcasts, and multimedia and social media publications. The department recently hired additional faculty members with expertise in multimedia production, podcasting and strategic communication to support this goal. This improvement is based on feedback from students in the exit surveys and from faculty observation. While students have performed well in news reporting, writing, design, and photography for print media, they will now have more support for entering categories for audio, video, multimedia and social media.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of the media.

Assessments: California Critical Thinking Skills Test and *QEP/EDGE Participation*

We will continue to pursue EDGE opportunities when appropriate to strengthen our students' critical-thinking skills. Two faculty and four courses participated EDGE grants in 2020-21. These courses were redesigned to incorporate projects geared toward engaging students in critical thinking and problem solving. We expect these student experiences to improve their critical-thinking skills. The course projects are described below:

COMM 4430, Advanced Interpersonal Communication
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Appendices

1. Curriculum Map

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

Course Number	Course Title	CS/J/ Both	Learning Outcome 1: Ability to write and edit for news media and public relations settings	Learning Outcome 2: Knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of media	Learning Outcome 3: Effective oral presentation skills and oral and written evaluation skills	Learning Outcome 4: Understanding of communication theory and research and their application to various communication environments
COMM 1020	Foundations of Comm	CS				X (I)
COMM 2025	Fundamentals of Communication	Both			X (I, A)	
COMM 2075	Organizational Comm	CS			X (I)	X (I)
COMM 2090	Interpersonal Communication	Both			X (I, A)	X (I, A)
COMM 3100	Communication Theory	Both				X (M)
COMM 3200	Research Methods in Communication	Both				X (M)
COMM 3620	Intercultural Communication	Both			X (R)	X (R)
COMM 3630	Discussion & Parliamentary Procedure	CS			X (R)	X (R)
COMM 4620	Advanced Public Speaking	CS			X (M, A)	
COMM 4630	Persuasion	CS			X (M, A)	X (M, A)

JOUR 2200	Mass Comm in a Changing Society	Both		X (I, A)		
JOUR 2220	News Reporting & Copy Editing	J	X (I, A)			
JOUR 3350	Newspaper Production & Design	J	X (R, A)			
JOUR 3370 or 3400 or 3500	Photojournalism or Intro to Broadcasting or Multimedia Storytelling	J	X (R, A)			
JOUR 3460	Intro to Public Relations	J		X (R, A)		
JOUR 3470	Public Relations Writing	J-PR	X (R)			
JOUR 3740	Advertising Copy & Layout	J	X (R)			
JOUR 3750	History of Journalism	J		X (R)		
JOUR 3770	Law of Journalism	Both		X (R, A)		
JOUR 4360	Magazine Production & Design	J	X (R, A)			
JOUR 4460	Public Relations/ Cases and Practices	J-PR	X (M, A)	X (M, A)		
JOUR 4710 or 4830	Literary Journalism or Feature Writing	J	X (M, A)			
JOUR 4820	Advanced Reporting	J	X (M, A)			
JOUR 4930	Advanced Copy Editing	J	X (M, A)			

"I"=Introduced; "R"=reinforced and opportunity to practice; "M"=mastery at the senior or exit level; "A"=assessment evidence collected.